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THE WIGGINS

MESSANGER

Musgrave pushes property rights bill through legislative process

Passes legislation responding to Supreme Court's expansion of property grabs through Agriculture Committee

Washington, DC: Today, Representative Marilyn Musgrave (CO-04) voted to pass legislation that would prohibit eminent domain property grabs in the House Committee on Agriculture. She is a co-sponsor of the bill that is a response to this Summer's decision by the U.S. Supreme Court to allow local government entities to take private property for the purpose economic development.

The next step in the legislative process is a vote by the entire House of Representatives.

"The Supreme Court's decision this Summer was astonishing because it takes power away from home owners and places it in the hands of government and economic developers," said Musgrave. "This is beyond the intent of our founding principles that separate America from any other nation in the world. We have always been a place that protects individuals and families that work hard to buy a home and property. This bill restores these protections taken from the Court.

"In the areas of Colorado I represent, there is private property in small mountain towns, rural areas, and along the rivers that could be taken by aggressive government officials," continued Musgrave. "Next to high gas prices, this is one of the most talked about issues raised

when I talk with Colorado residents."

As a Member of the House Committee on Agriculture, Congresswoman Musgrave joined the bi-partisan effort to pass the Strengthening The Ownership of Private Property (STOPP) Act. This bill was introduced by Henry Bonilla (D-TX) to prevent federal economic development funding for local and state projects where eminent domain powers are abused by the taking of property for private economic development.

Last month, Musgrave joined as a co-sponsor of H.R. 3405. It has strong bi-partisan support. Liberals and conservatives are coming together to decry the *Kelo* ruling, including Representatives like Maxine Waters (D-CA), Bob Goodlatte (R-VA), and Henry Bonilla.

On June 23, 2005, the U.S. Supreme Court in the *Kelo v. City of New London* case expanded the power of eminent domain and relaxed the definition of "public use" to allow governments to take private property and give it to another private entity for "economic development." The term "public use" has traditionally been associated with projects such as schools, roads, public parks and right of way access for utilities. In New London, CT, it was used to build a hotel, shopping areas, parking, and a riverwalk.